

## (12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
27 June 2002 (27.06.2002)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 02/49685 A2**

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: **A61L 15/00**

Marietta, GA 30062 (US). **SCHILD, Lisa, Ann**; 1027 Hemingway Lane, Roswell, GA 30075 (US).

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US01/48857

(22) International Filing Date:  
12 December 2001 (12.12.2001)

(74) Agents: **ROBINSON, James, B.** et al.; Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc., 401 N. Lake Street, Neenah, WI 54956 (US).

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:  
09/748,337 21 December 2000 (21.12.2000) US

(81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

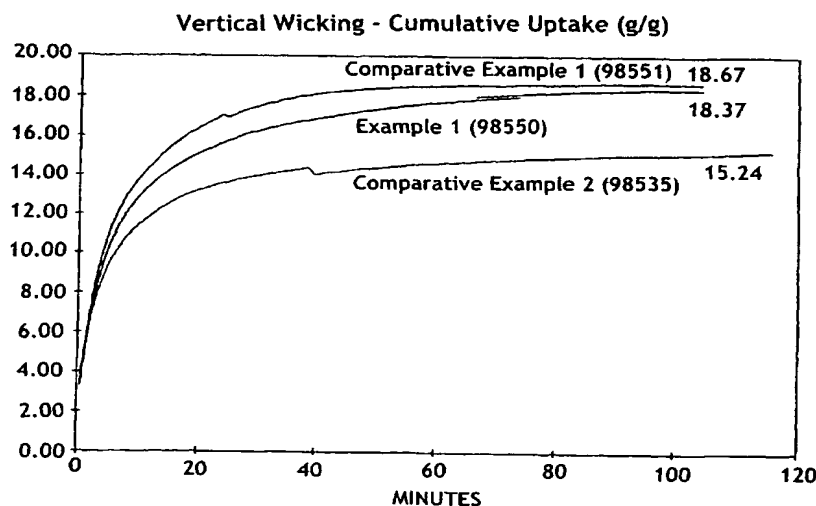
(71) Applicant: **KIMBERLY-CLARK WORLDWIDE, INC.** [US/US]; 401 N. Lake Street, Neenah, WI 54956 (US).

(84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

(72) Inventors: **SAWYER, Lawrence, Howell**; 117 Ashbrooke Place, Neenah, WI 54956 (US). **BURNES, Andrew, Scott**; 11 Hickory Drive, Medfield, MA 02052 (US). **LITTLE, Sylvia, Bandy**; 3051 Intrepid Close,

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: LAYERED COMPOSITES FOR PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS



(57) Abstract: There is provided a new multi-layered fibrous material for use in personal care products. In this material, a layer having a mixture of pulp, superabsorbent and binder is adjacent a layer having a very high superabsorbent concentration. The structure is then compacted to a density of between about 0.1 to 0.3 g/cc. These layered structures have better intake properties than traditionally made competitive materials. These structures surprisingly also have better distribution properties than competitive materials. Such a fibrous material is useful in personal care products, like diapers, training pants, incontinence garments and feminine hygiene products.

**Declarations under Rule 4.17:**

- as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii)) for the following designations AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG)

- as to the applicant's entitlement to claim the priority of the earlier application (Rule 4.17(iii)) for all designations

**Published:**

- without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

## **LAYERED COMPOSITES FOR PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS**

### **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

5           The present invention concerns formed materials mainly for personal care products like diapers, training pants, swim wear, absorbent underpants, adult incontinence products and feminine hygiene products. This material may also be useful for other applications such as, for example, in bandages and wound dressings, nursing pads and in veterinary and mortuary applications.

10           Personal care articles usually have multiple layers of material of some sort to absorb liquids from the body. These layers may include natural fibers, synthetic fibers and superabsorbent particles in varying proportions. When liquid such as urine is deposited into a personal care product like a diaper, it goes through the uppermost layers, typically a liner against the body and a "surge" or "intake" layer designed to provide  
15 temporary liquid holding capacity. The product may also have a "distribution" layer designed to move liquid in the X and Y directions in order to utilize more of the absorbent core. After going through these upper layers, the urine enters the absorbent core portion of the product. The absorbent core permanently retains the liquid.

          The functions of the layers mentioned above may each be performed by different  
20 layers or a layer may perform more than one function. The combination of more than one function in a single layer, however, generally results in a significant decrease in the performance of each of the functions.

          Absorbent cores are typically composed of superabsorbent particles and/or pulp. A newer class of absorbents also uses a binder to improve wet stability and to ease  
25 converting into final products. Binders can be liquid adhesive or thermally activatable fibers typically present in amounts between 10 and 25 weight percent.

Superabsorbent particles absorb many times their weight in liquid and swell greatly as a result of being wetted. This swelling holds liquid within the product and so protects the wearer's skin, clothing and bedding, but may also block the further intake of liquid. This occurs because the swollen particles become so large as to close off fluid entrances  
5 to the structure, a phenomenon known in the art as "gel blocking".

Alternatively, an absorbent structure lacking superabsorbent and made of the traditional pulp and binder fiber can experience "wet collapse". This occurs as a result of saturation of the pulp and the subsequent inability to regenerate void space as fluid is added to the structure. The binder fibers, generally synthetic polymer fibers that are  
10 naturally hydrophobic, contribute to this problem since they interfere with the wicking performance of the structure due to their poor wettability. In addition, the constraints induced by the bonding of the binder fibers restrains expansion of the absorbent structure, further reducing void volume and decreasing the ultimate capacity of the material. If the structure were able to wick fluid away from the area of incipient wet collapse more  
15 efficiently, the phenomenon might be avoided completely.

A material which treads the fine line between wet collapse and gel blocking would be very desirable. Such a material would avoid the undesirable features of uncontrolled superabsorbent expansion while efficiently absorbing fluids. It would also avoid wet collapse by maintaining a sufficient pore structure, allowing liquid to continue moving  
20 through it. Such a material would exhibit high levels of multi-functional absorbent performance.

### **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

25 In response to the discussed difficulties and problems encountered in the prior art, a new structural composite comprising integrated layers for use in personal care products

has been developed. In this material, at least one layer having a mixture of pulp, superabsorbent in an amount between 1 and 30 weight percent and binder in an amount between 1 and 6 weight percent, is adjacent a layer having a very high superabsorbent concentration. There may be alternating layers of similar composition. The overall amount of binder within the structure is at most 4 weight percent and the overall amount of superabsorbent within the structure is between 35 and 80 weight percent. The structure is then compacted to a density of between about 0.1 to 0.3 g/cc. These layered structures have better intake properties than traditionally made competitive materials. These structures surprisingly also have better distribution properties than competitive materials, presumably due to the avoidance of gel blocking, capillary disruption and wet collapse.

Another way of describing this material is as having from two to nine alternating A and B layers where the A layers are a mixture of pulp, binder in an amount between 1 and 6 weight percent and superabsorbent in an amount between 1 and 30 weight percent, and the B layers have a superabsorbent concentration of at least 80 weight percent. The overall material also has binder in an amount of at most 4 weight percent and superabsorbent in an amount between 35 and 80 weight percent, is compacted to a density of between about 0.1 to 0.3 g/cc and has a basis weight between 80 and 1200 gsm.

The amount of superabsorbent in the A layer is more particularly between 5 and 28 weight percent and still more particularly between 15 and 25 weight percent.

The layered material may have an even number of layers or an odd number of layers. If the layered material has an odd number of layers the outermost layers may be A or B layers. More particular embodiments of the layered material may have 5 layers and a basis weight between 200 and 667 gsm and 7 layers and a basis weight between 280 and 934 gsm.

These materials are suitable for use in personal care products like diapers, training pants, incontinence products, bandages, and sanitary napkins.

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

5

Figure 1a shows the cumulative uptake of fluid in g/g in a vertical wicking test.

Figure 1b shows the final saturation profile in a vertical wicking test.

### **DEFINITIONS**

10

"Liquid communication" means that liquid is able to travel from one layer to another layer, or one location to another within a layer.

"Hydrophilic" describes fibers or the surfaces of fibers that are wetted by the aqueous liquids in contact with the fibers. The degree of wetting of the materials can, in turn, be described in terms of the contact angles and the surface tensions of the liquids and materials involved. Equipment and techniques suitable for measuring the wettability of particular fiber materials can be provided by a Cahn SFA-222 Surface Force Analyzer System, or a substantially equivalent system. When measured with this system, fibers having contact angles less than 90° are designated "wetable" or hydrophilic, while fibers having contact angles equal to or greater than to 90° are designated "nonwetable" or hydrophobic.

As used herein the term "nonwoven fabric or web" means a web having a structure of individual fibers or threads which are interlaid, but not in an identifiable manner as in a knitted fabric. Nonwoven fabrics or webs have been formed from many processes such as for example, meltblowing processes, spunbonding processes, and bonded carded web processes. The basis weight of nonwoven fabrics is usually expressed in ounces of material

per square yard (osy) or grams per square meter (gsm) and the fiber diameters useful are usually expressed in microns. (Note that to convert from osy to gsm, multiply osy by 33.91).

“Spunbonded fibers” refers to small diameter fibers that are formed by extruding  
5 molten thermoplastic material as filaments from a plurality of fine capillaries of a spinneret. Such a process is disclosed in, for example, US Patent 4,340,563 to Appel et al. The fibers may also have shapes such as those described, for example, in US Patents 5,277,976 to Hogle et al. which describes fibers with unconventional shapes.

“Bonded carded web” refers to webs that are made from staple fibers which are  
10 sent through a combing or carding unit, which separates or breaks apart and aligns the staple fibers in the machine direction to form a generally machine direction-oriented fibrous nonwoven web. This material may be bonded together by methods that include point bonding, through air bonding, ultrasonic bonding, adhesive bonding, etc.

As used herein, the term “coform” means a process in which at least one meltblown  
15 diehead is arranged near a chute through which other materials are added to the web while it is forming. Such other materials may be pulp, superabsorbent particles, natural fibers (for example, rayon or cotton fibers) and/or synthetic fibers (for example, polypropylene or polyester) fibers, for example, where the fibers may be short cut of staple length. Coform processes are shown in commonly assigned US Patents 4,818,464 to Lau and 4,100,324 to  
20 Anderson et al. Webs produced by the coform process are generally referred to as coform materials.

“Airlaying” is a well-known process by which a fibrous nonwoven layer can be formed. In the airlaying process, bundles of small fibers having typical lengths ranging from about 3 to about 52 millimeters (mm) are separated and entrained in an air supply  
25 and then deposited onto a forming screen, usually with the assistance of a vacuum supply. The randomly deposited fibers then are bonded to one another using, for

example, hot air to activate a binder component or a latex adhesive. Airlaying is taught in, for example, US Patent 4,640,810 to Laursen et al.

“Personal care product” means diapers, training pants, swim wear, absorbent underpants, adult incontinence products, bandages and feminine hygiene products. It may  
5 further encompass veterinary and mortuary products.

### **TEST METHODS AND MATERIALS**

Basis Weight: A circular sample of 3 inches (7.6 cm) diameter is cut and weighed  
10 using a balance. Weight is recorded in grams. The weight is divided by the sample area. Five samples are measured and averaged.

Material caliper or bulk (thickness): The caliper of a material is a measure of thickness and is measured at 0.05 psi (3.5 g/cm<sup>2</sup>) with a STARRET® bulk tester, in units of millimeters. Samples are cut into 4 inch by 4 inch (10.2 cm by 10.2 cm) squares and five  
15 samples are tested and the results averaged.

Density: The density of the materials is calculated by dividing the weight per unit area of a sample in grams per square meter (gsm) by the material caliper in millimeters (mm). The caliper should be measured at 0.05 psi (3.5 g/cm<sup>2</sup>) as mentioned above. The result is multiplied by 0.001 to convert the value to grams per cubic centimeter (g/cc). A  
20 total of five samples would be evaluated and averaged for the density values.

Vertical wicking: A “near” equilibrium test was developed to assess the maximum wicking potential of absorbent composite materials. Many of these composites contain superabsorbent so the approach to equilibrium required more time than non-  
superabsorbent containing materials, however, it was desired to keep test times within  
25 practical lab and use evaluation time frames. A series of experiments with several types



of absorbent composites established two hours as the time allowed for materials to achieve "near" liquid saturation profiles for this vertical wicking test.

Test samples were cut in strips 5.08 cm by 17.78 cm. Three samples of each test material were run. The samples were suspended from the bottom sensing element of a Mettler Model 4800 balance and the bottom two centimeters of each sample were submerged in a large 10 weight percent saline reservoir for 120 minutes. Weight pickup was automatically recorded throughout the time period and the whole system was enclosed to minimize air drafts and evaporation. After 120 minutes, the samples were x-rayed to determine the liquid saturation on the material above the submersion line. All g/g values were calculated using the dry and wet mass of the sample above the submersion line.

Void Volume: Void volume of airlaid composites was evaluated at 0, 2.5, 5, 7.5, 10, 15, and 20 g/g saturation levels to determine the amount of void space generated at different levels of saturation. The procedure involves evenly saturating pre-weighed and pre-bulked 3 inch (7.12 cm) round samples to the various saturation levels. The samples are placed in a petri dish with water and left for approximately 20 minutes to allow swelling of the superabsorbent component of the composite. The samples are then removed from the dish, and wet weights and bulks are recorded. The weight of fluid (g) added to a sample is calculated by multiplying the sample dry weight (g) by the saturation level (g/g). Void volume is calculated and reported in cc/g. Three repetitions per sample at each saturation level were performed. These values may be plotted versus the saturation level of the composite.

Void volume (cc/g) is calculated as follows:

$$VoidVolume = \left( \frac{1}{DryWt.} \right) \times \left[ (4.56 * WetBulk) - DryWt. * \left( \frac{\%SAP}{140} + \frac{\%Pulp}{DensityPulp * 100} + \frac{\%Binder}{DensityBinder * 100} - 1 \right) - WetWt. \right]$$

FIFE: The horizontal Fluid Intake and Flowback Evaluation (FIFE) was performed on all samples to determine the intake potential of the composites. The FIFE entails insulting the structure by pouring a defined amount of 0.9 percent saline solution into a cylindrical column resting vertically on top of the structure and recording the time it takes for the fluid to be taken in by the structure. The sample to be tested is placed on a flat surface and the FIFE testing apparatus placed on top of the sample. The FIFE testing apparatus consisted of a rectangular, 43.2 by 23 cm, gel filled flat piece upon which was centered a cylinder with an inside diameter of 25.4 mm. The flat piece had a 25.4 mm hole corresponding with the cylinder so that fluid could pass through it from the cylinder to the sample. The FIFE testing apparatus weighed 4.63 kg (10.2 pounds).

Intake times are typically recorded in seconds, but, in this case, were recorded as seconds per basis weight. Samples were cut into 6 by 14 inch (15.2 by 35.6 cm) pledgets and were insulted three times at 60 mL per insult with a wait of 15 minutes between the time the fluid was completely absorbed and the next insult.

After the third insult, the materials were placed on a vacuum box under 0.5 psi of pressure with a piece of blotter paper on top. The blotter paper was 110 lb. Verigood paper made by Fort James Corporation and was 3.5 by 12 inches (8.9 by 30.5 cm). The blotter paper was weighed before and after the test and the resulting differential reported as the flowback value as grams of fluid desorbed.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a high absorbency, integrated, layered structure of material for personal care products.

5       The structure has at least two layers. The first layer is made from pulp, superabsorbent and binder. The second layer is made primarily from superabsorbent. Additional layers of either type may be added to the structure.

10       The first layer has pulp, between 1 and 30 weight percent superabsorbent, and from 1 to 6 weight percent of a binder. The binder may more particularly be between 1 and 5 percent and still more particularly between 1 and 4 percent. The purpose of the binder is to give the structure integrity by binding the fibers and particles together.

      The second layer can have between 80 and 100 weight percent superabsorbent preferably between 90 and 100 percent superabsorbent, with a minor amount of pulp and binder.

15       The overall amount of binder in the structure is at most 4 weight percent and the overall amount of superabsorbent in the structure is between 35 and 80 weight percent.

      The absorbent composites and absorbent systems of this invention may be made from a variety of processes traditionally used to prepare stabilized nonwoven webs including coform, carding, meltblowing, spunbonded, airlaying, needlepunching, wetlaying, 20 hydroentangling etc. Preferred embodiments of this application are prepared using the airlaid process. The nonwoven airlaid composites may be prepared from a variety of fibers and mixtures of fibers including but not limited to synthetic fibers, natural fibers including hydroentangled pulp, mechanically and chemically softened pulp, staple fibers, slivers, meltblown and spunbond fibers and the like.

25       The production of airlaid nonwoven composites is well defined in the literature and documented in the art. Example include the DanWeb process as described in US patent #

4,640,810 Laursen et al assigned to Scan Web of North America Inc; the Kroyer process as described in US patent # 4,494,278 Kroyer et al and US patent # 5,527,171 Soerensen assigned to Niro Separation a/s; the method of US patent # 4,375,448 Appel et al assigned to Kimberly-Clark Corporation, or other similar methods. The webs produce by these methods are subsequently bonded together to form an adequate tensile strength web by thermal fusing, latex bonding or combinations thereof, which are well known in the art. Webs produced in this text are best exemplified but not limited to the Danweb process.

Superabsorbents that are useful in the present inventions can be chosen from classes based on chemical structure as well as physical form. These include superabsorbents with low gel strength, high gel strength, surface cross-linked superabsorbents, uniformly cross-linked superabsorbents, or superabsorbents with varied cross-link density throughout the structure. Superabsorbents may be based on chemistries that include poly(acrylic acid), poly(iso-butylene-co-maleic anhydride), poly(ethylene oxide), carboxy-methyl cellulose, poly(-vinyl pyrrolidone), and poly(-vinyl alcohol). The superabsorbents may range in swelling rate from slow to fast. The superabsorbents may be in the form of foams, macroporous or microporous particles or fibers, particles or fibers with fibrous or particulate coatings or morphology. The superabsorbents may be in the shape of ribbons, particles, fibers, sheets or films. Superabsorbents may be in various length and diameter sizes and distributions. The superabsorbents may be in various degrees of neutralization. Counter-ions are typically Li, Na, K, Ca.

Materials of this invention may include superabsorbents of the types mentioned above. An exemplary superabsorbent was obtained from Stockhausen, Inc and is designated FAVOR® SXM 880. Another example of these types of superabsorbents may be obtained from the Dow Chemical Company under the name DRYTECH® 2035. An example of fibrous superabsorbents may be obtained from Camelot Technologies, Ltd., of

High River, Alberta, Canada and is designated FIBERDRI® 1241. Another Example included in these types of superabsorbents is obtained from Chemtall Inc. or Riceboro, GA, and is designated FLOSORB 60 LADY®, also known as LADYSORB 60®. Additional types of superabsorbents not listed here which are commonly available and known to those skilled in the art can also be useful in the present inventions.

Binders typically used in these structures help provide mechanical integrity and stabilization. Binders include fiber, liquid or other binder means that may be thermally activated. Preferred fibers for inclusion are those having a relative melting point such as polyolefin fibers. Lower melting point polymers provide the ability to bond the fabric together at fiber cross-over points upon the application of heat. In addition, fibers having a lower melting polymer, like conjugate and biconstituent fibers are suitable for practice of this invention. Fibers having a lower melting polymer are generally referred to as "fusible fibers". By "lower melting polymers" what is meant are those having a glass transition temperature less than about 175 C. It should be noted that the texture of the absorbent web can be modified from soft to stiff through selection of the fusion and quenching behavior of the polymer. Exemplary binder fibers include conjugate fibers of polyolefins, polyamides and polyesters. Three suitable binder fibers are sheath core conjugate fibers available from KoSa Inc. (Charlotte, North Carolina) under the designation T-255 and T-256, both with a polyolefin sheath, or T-254, which has a low melt co-polyester sheath. Many suitable binder fibers are known to those skilled in the art, and are available by many manufacturers such as Chisso and Fibervisions LLC of Wilmington, DE. A suitable liquid binder is KYMENE® 557LX available from Hercules Inc. of Wilmington, DE. Other suitable liquid binders include ethylene vinyl acetate emulsion polymers sold by National Starch and Chemical Company (Bridgewater, New Jersey) under the tradename DUR-O-SET® ELITE® series (including ELITE® 33 and ELITE® 22). Other suitable binders are sold by Air Products Polymers and Chemicals under the name AIRFLEX®.

Synthetic fibers include those made from polyolefins, polyamides, polyesters, rayon, acrylics, superabsorbents, TENCEL® regenerated cellulose and any other suitable synthetic fibers known to those skilled in the art. Synthetic fibers may also include kosmotropes for product degradation.

5 Many polyolefins are available for fiber production, for example polyethylenes such as Dow Chemical's ASPUN® 6811A liner low density polyethylene, 2553 LLDPE and 25355 and 12350 high density polyethylene are such suitable polymers. The polyethylenes have melt flow rates, respectively, of about 26, 40, 25 and 12. Fiber forming polypropylenes include Exxon Chemical Company's ESCORENE® PD 3445  
10 polypropylene and Montell Chemical Co.'s PF304. Many other polyolefins are also available.

Natural fibers include wool, cotton, flax, hemp and wood pulp. Wood pulps include standard softwood fluffing grade such as NB-416 (Weyerhaeuser Corporation, Tacoma, Washington) and CR-1654 (US Alliance Pulp Mills, Coosa, Alabama). Pulp may be  
15 modified in order to enhance the inherent characteristics of the fibers and their processability. Curl may be imparted to the fibers by methods including chemical treatment or mechanical twisting. Curl is typically imparted before crosslinking or stiffening. Pulps may be stiffened by the use of crosslinking agents such as formaldehyde or its derivatives, glutaraldehyde, epichlorohydrin, methylolated compounds such as urea  
20 or urea derivatives, dialdehydes such as maleic anhydride, non-methylolated urea derivatives, citric acid or other polycarboxylic acids. Some of these agents are less preferable than others due to environmental and health concerns. Pulp may also be stiffened by the use of heat or caustic treatments such as mercerization. Examples of these types of fibers include NHB416 which is a chemically crosslinked southern softwood  
25 pulp fibers which enhances wet modulus, available from the Weyerhaeuser Corporation of Tacoma, WA. Other useful pulps are debonded pulp (NF405) also from Weyerhaeuser. HPZ3 from Buckeye Technologies, Inc of Memphis, TN, has a chemical treatment that

sets in a curl and twist, in addition to imparting added dry and wet stiffness and resilience to the fiber. Another suitable pulp is Buckeye HPF2 pulp and still another is IP SUPERSOFT® from International Paper Corporation. Suitable rayon fibers are 1.5 denier Merge 18453 fibers from Tencel Incorporated of Axis, Alabama.

5           An Example and Comparative Examples, all made by the airlaying process, follow:

Example 1     (98550)

          An integrated five layered structure was made having alternating layers of superabsorbent and a mixture of superabsorbent, pulp and binder. The first layer (A) towards a wearer was made of 70 weight percent NB416 pulp, 5 weight percent T-255  
10   binder fiber and 25 weight percent FAVOR® SXM 880 superabsorbent and had a basis weight of 115 gsm. The second layer (B) was made of 100 percent FAVOR® SXM 880 superabsorbent and had a basis weight of 43 gsm. The third layer (C) was identical to layer A. The fourth layer (D) was identical to layer B. The fifth layer (E) was identical to layers A and C. The overall basis weight was 431 gsm, the density was 0.17 g/cm<sup>3</sup> and  
15   the saturated capacity was 73.9 g/100 cm<sup>2</sup>. The overall structure contained 40 weight percent FAVOR® SXM 880 superabsorbent, 56 weight percent NB416 pulp and 4 weight percent T-255 binder fiber.

Comparative Example 1     (98551)

This is not an example of the invention.

20           A seven layered (A through G) structure was made having alternating layers of superabsorbent and a mixture of superabsorbent, pulp and binder. The first layer (A) towards a wearer was made of 95 weight percent NB416 pulp and 5 weight percent T-255 binder and had a basis weight of 65 gsm. The second layer (B) was made of 100 percent FAVOR® SXM 880 superabsorbent and had a basis weight of 58 gsm. Layers C, E and  
25   G were identical to layer A. Layers D and F were identical to layer B. The overall basis weight was 434 gsm, the density was 0.17 g/cm<sup>3</sup> and the saturated capacity was 73.9

g/100 cm<sup>2</sup>. The overall structure had 40 weight percent FAVOR® SXM 880 superabsorbent, 56 weight percent NB416 pulp and 4 weight percent T-255 binder fiber.

Comparative Example 2 (98535)

This is not an example of the invention.

5 A homogenous structure was made. It was made with 56 weight percent NB416 pulp, 40 weight percent FAVOR® SXM 880 superabsorbent and 4 weight percent T-255 binder fibers. The overall basis weight was 370 gsm, the density was 0.17 g/cm<sup>3</sup> and the saturated capacity was 63.2 g/100 cm<sup>2</sup>.

The above materials were tested for vertical wicking, FIFE and void volume. The  
10 results for FIFE and void volume are given in Tables 1 and 2 below and the results for vertical wicking given in graphical form in Figure 1a and 1b. Figure 1a shows the cumulative uptake of fluid in g/g with the X-axis denoting minutes and the Y-axis denoting the g/g of fluid. In Figure 1a, the uppermost line is Comparative Example 1, the middle line is Example 1, and the lowermost line is Comparative Example 2. Figure 1b shows the  
15 final saturation profile with vertical centimeters of fluid movement on the X-axis denoting minutes and the Y-axis denoting the g/g of fluid. In Figure 1b, the lowermost line is Comparative Example 2, the middle line on the far right is Comparative Example 1 and the uppermost line on the far right is Example 1.

20

25



Table 1 – FIFE results

	Code #	1 <sup>st</sup> Insult (sec/gsm)	2nd Insult (sec/gsm)	3rd Insult (sec/gsm)	Flowback (g)
Example 1.	98550	0.06	0.20	0.27	14.7
Comparative Example 1.	98551	0.08	0.21	0.31	13.0
Comparative Example 2.	98535	0.09	0.28	0.39	17.9

Table 2 – Void Volume (cc/g)

Saturation Level (g/g)	0	2.5	5	7.5	10	15	20
Example 1. (98550)	5.43	7.87	7.85	9.15	7.35	4.44	1.51
Comparative Example 1. (98551)	4.96	6.83	7.36	6.81	6.81	4.11	2.31
Comparative Example 2. (98535)	7.36	10.06	9.2	7.83	7.39	4.35	2.7

5

As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, changes and variations to the invention are considered to be within the ability of those skilled in the art. Examples of such changes and variations are contained in the patents identified above, each of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety to the extent consistent with this specification. Such changes and variations are intended by the inventors to be within the scope of the invention.

10

What is claimed is:

- 1) A layered material for personal care products comprising a first layer which is a mixture of pulp, binder in an amount between 1 and 6 weight percent and superabsorbent in an amount between 1 and 30 weight percent, adjacent a second layer having a superabsorbent concentration of at least 80 weight percent, wherein  
5 said material has binder in an amount of at most 4 weight percent and superabsorbent in an amount between 35 and 80 weight percent and is compacted to a density of between about 0.1 to 0.3 g/cc.
- 2) The material of claim 1 wherein said superabsorbent concentration in said second  
10 layer is at least 90 weight percent.
- 3) The material of claim 1 further comprising a third layer adjacent said second layer having a mixture of pulp, binder in an amount between 1 and 6 weight percent and superabsorbent in an amount between 1 and 30 weight percent.
- 4) The material of claim 3 further comprising a fourth layer adjacent said third layer  
15 having a superabsorbent concentration of at least 80 weight percent.
- 5) The material of claim 4 further comprising a fifth layer adjacent said fourth layer having a mixture of pulp, binder in an amount between 1 and 6 weight percent.
- 6) A diaper comprising the material of claim 1.
- 7) A training pant comprising the material of claim 1.
- 20 8) An incontinence product comprising the material of claim 1.
- 9) A bandage comprising the material of claim 1.
- 10) A sanitary napkin comprising the material of claim 1.

11) A layered material for personal care products comprising from two to nine alternating A and B layers, said A layer is a mixture of pulp, binder in an amount between 1 and 6 weight percent and superabsorbent in an amount between 1 and 30 weight percent, and said B layer has a superabsorbent concentration of at least 80 weight percent, wherein said material has binder in an amount of at most 4 weight percent and superabsorbent in an amount between 35 and 80 weight percent, is compacted to a density of between about 0.1 to 0.3 g/cc and has a basis weight between 80 and 1200 gsm.

12) The layered material of claim 11 having between 5 and 28 weight percent superabsorbent in said A layer.

13) The layered material of claim 12 having between 15 and 25 weight percent superabsorbent in said A layer.

14) The layered material of claim 11 having an even number of layers.

15) The layered material of claim 11 having an odd number of layers and wherein said outermost layers are A layers.

16) The layered material of claim 11 having an odd number of layers and wherein said outermost layers are B layers.

17) The layered material of claim 15 having 5 layers and a basis weight between 200 and 667 gsm.

18) The layered material of claim 15 having 7 layers and a basis weight between 280 and 934 gsm.

19) The layered material of claim 16 having 5 layers and a basis weight between 200 and 667 gsm.

20) The layered material of claim 16 having 7 layers and a basis weight between 280 and 934 gsm.

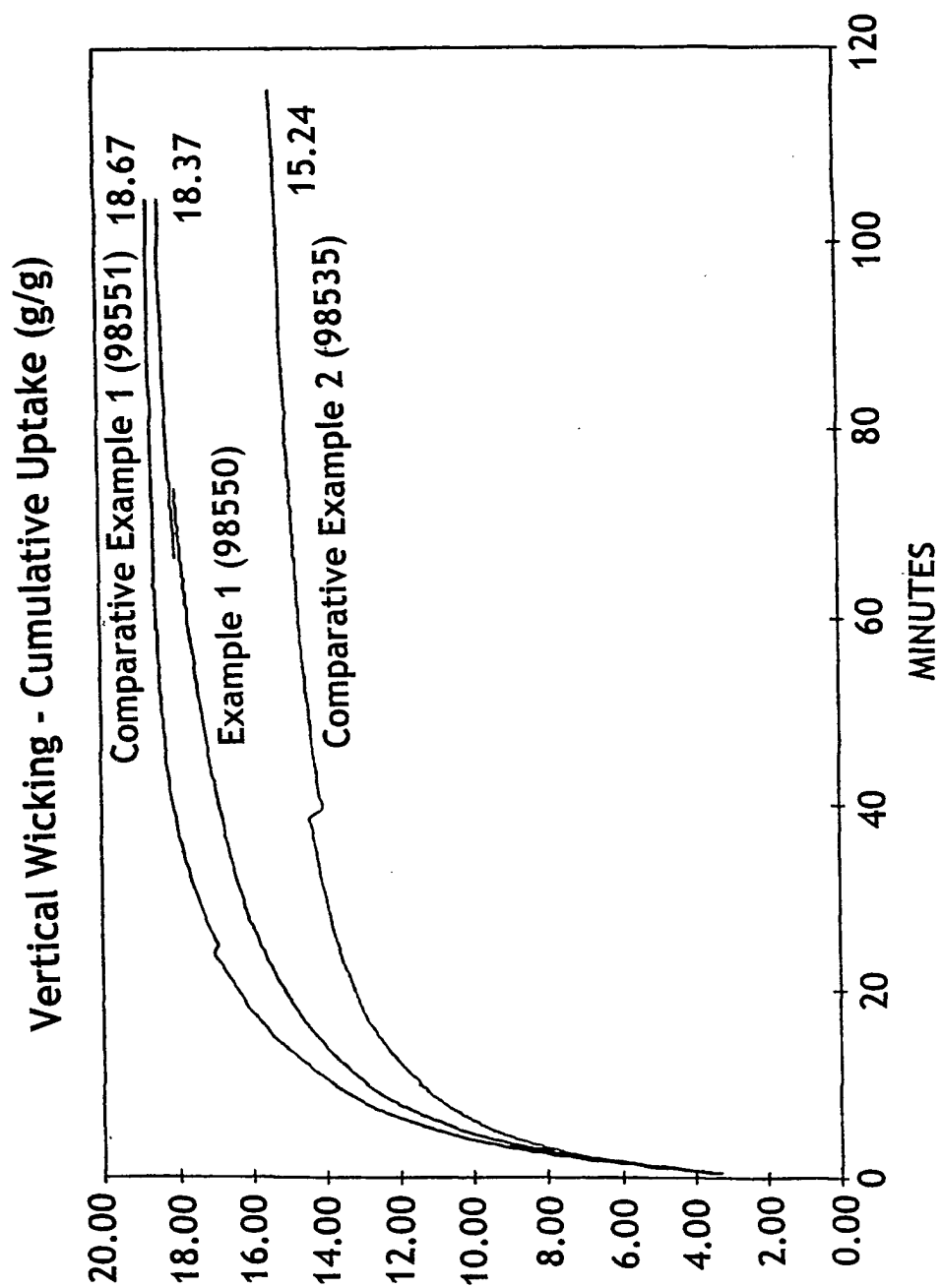


FIG. 1A

2/2

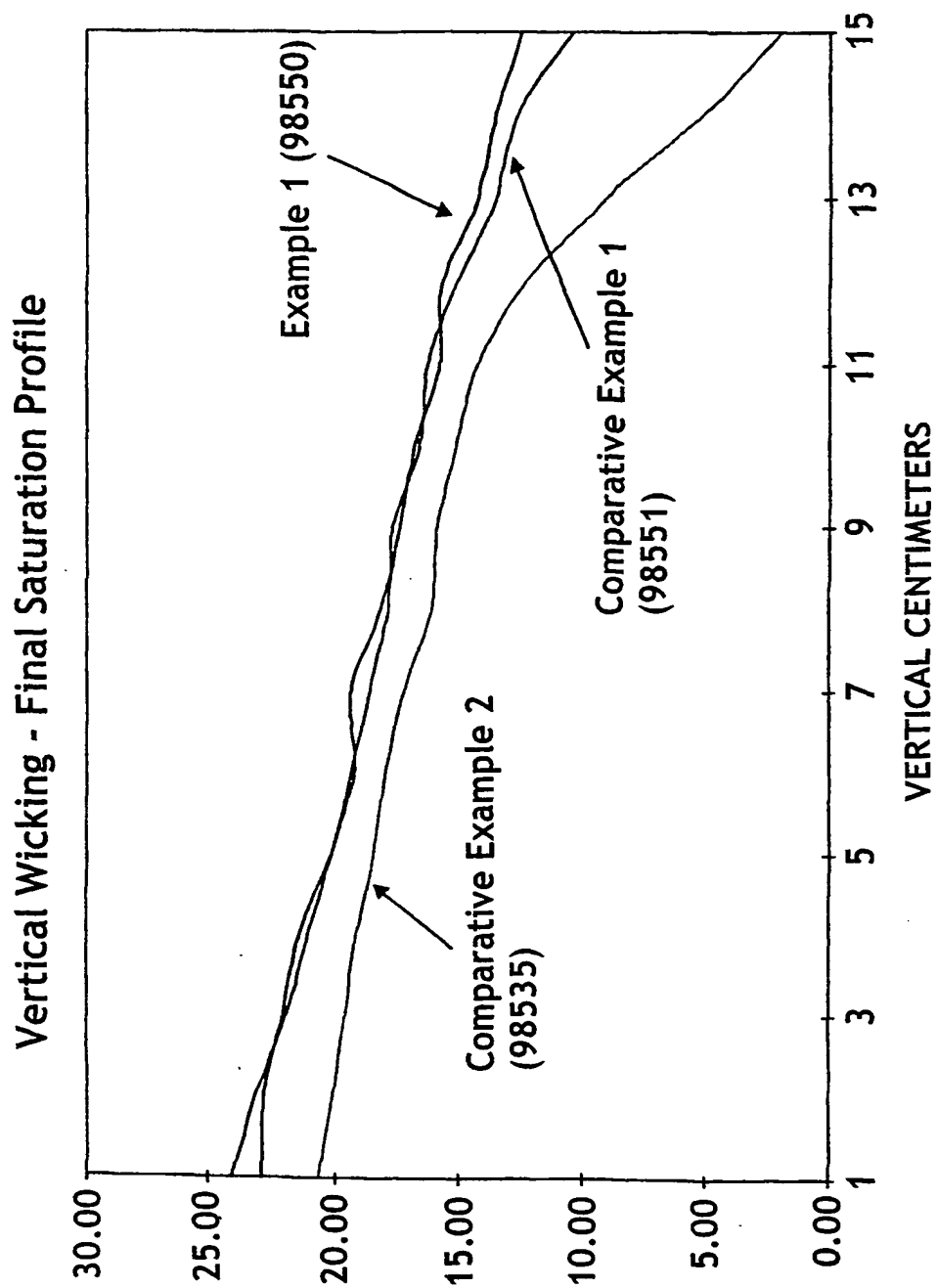


FIG. 1B

**THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)**

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
27 June 2002 (27.06.2002)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 02/049685 A3**

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: **A61F 13/15**,  
B32B 5/22, A61F 13/534, 13/537, B32B 7/00, 5/26

Marietta, GA 30062 (US). **SCHILD, Lisa, Ann**; 1027  
Hemingway Lane, Roswell, GA 30075 (US).

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US01/48857

(74) Agents: **ROBINSON, James, B.** et al.; Kimberly-Clark  
Worldwide, Inc., 401 N. Lake Street, Neenah, WI 54956  
(US).

(22) International Filing Date:  
12 December 2001 (12.12.2001)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:  
09/748,337 21 December 2000 (21.12.2000) US

(81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU,  
AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU,  
CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH,  
GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC,  
LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW,  
MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG,  
SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VN,  
YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

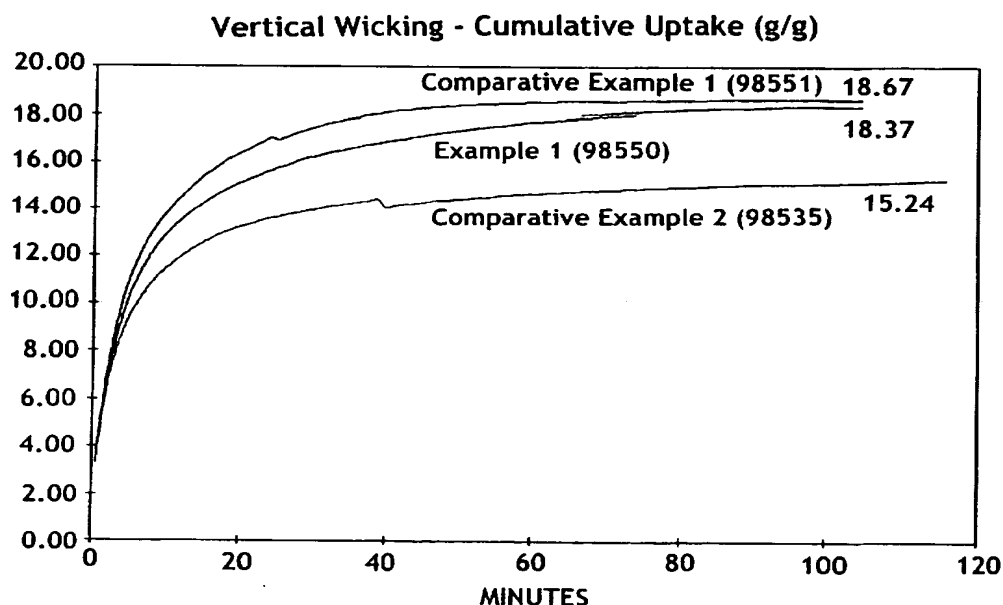
(71) Applicant: **KIMBERLY-CLARK WORLDWIDE, INC.** [US/US]; 401 N. Lake Street, Neenah, WI 54956  
(US).

(84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM,  
KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW),  
Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM),  
European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR,  
GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent  
(BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR,  
NE, SN, TD, TG).

(72) Inventors: **SAWYER, Lawrence, Howell**; 117 Ash-  
brooke Place, Neenah, WI 54956 (US). **BURNES,**  
**Andrew, Scott**; 11 Hickory Drive, Medfield, MA 02052  
(US). **LITTLE, Sylvia, Bandy**; 3051 Intrepid Close,

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: LAYERED COMPOSITES FOR PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS



(57) Abstract: There is provided a new multi-layered fibrous material for use in personal care products. In this material, a layer having a mixture of pulp, superabsorbent and binder is adjacent a layer having a very high superabsorbent concentration. The structure is then compacted to a density of between about 0.1 to 0.3 g/cc. These layered structures have better intake properties than traditionally made competitive materials. These structures surprisingly also have better distribution properties than competitive materials. Such a fibrous material is useful in personal care products, like diapers, training pants, incontinence garments and feminine hygiene products.

WO 02/049685 A3

**Declarations under Rule 4.17:**

— as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii)) for the following designations AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG)

— as to the applicant's entitlement to claim the priority of the earlier application (Rule 4.17(iii)) for all designations

**Published:**

— with international search report

**(88) Date of publication of the international search report:**

16 January 2003

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.



## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

In International Application No

PCT/US 01/48857

## A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 7 A61F13/15 B32B5/22 A61F13/534 A61F13/537 B32B7/00  
B32B5/26

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 A61F B32B

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5 730 737 A (HANSSON ROY ET AL) 24 March 1998 (1998-03-24) column 4, line 22-40 column 9, line 26 -column 10, line 35; figure 10	1-20
A	--- US 5 891 119 A (TA KOUKI ET AL) 6 April 1999 (1999-04-06) column 1, line 53 -column 2, line 18 column 3, line 14-19	1-20
A	--- US 5 558 655 A (JEZZI ARRIGO D ET AL) 24 September 1996 (1996-09-24) column 2, line 59 -column 5, line 37; figures 2,3	1-20
	--- -/--	

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

## \* Special categories of cited documents:

\*A\* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

\*E\* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

\*L\* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

\*O\* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

\*P\* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

\*T\* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

\*X\* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

\*Y\* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

\*&amp;\* document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

9 September 2002

Date of mailing of the international search report

20/09/2002

Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2  
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk  
Tel (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,  
Fax (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Seabra, L

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

In International Application No

PCT/US 01/48857

## C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	<p>WO 99 32165 A (KIMBERLY CLARK CO)  1 July 1999 (1999-07-01)  claims; examples</p> <p>-----</p>	1,6-11

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.

PCT/US 01/48857

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 5730737	A	24-03-1998	SE 508961 C2	23-11-1998
			AT 192324 T	15-05-2000
			AT 189595 T	15-02-2000
			AT 188867 T	15-02-2000
			AT 188868 T	15-02-2000
			AU 674041 B2	05-12-1996
			AU 5535994 A	08-06-1994
			AU 5580794 A	08-06-1994
			AU 5580894 A	08-06-1994
			AU 677804 B2	08-05-1997
			AU 5580994 A	08-06-1994
			CA 2149028 A1	26-05-1994
			CZ 9501223 A3	17-01-1996
			CZ 9501249 A3	18-10-1995
			CZ 9501278 A3	18-10-1995
			CZ 9501285 A3	18-10-1995
			DE 69327673 D1	24-02-2000
			DE 69327673 T2	31-05-2000
			DE 69327674 D1	24-02-2000
			DE 69327674 T2	29-06-2000
			DE 69327855 D1	16-03-2000
			DE 69327855 T2	15-06-2000
			DE 69328574 D1	08-06-2000
			DE 69328574 T2	14-09-2000
			DK 773764 T3	18-09-2000
			DK 773766 T3	15-05-2000
			DK 773767 T3	25-04-2000
			DK 773768 T3	08-05-2000
			EP 0773764 A1	21-05-1997
			EP 0773766 A1	21-05-1997
			EP 0773767 A1	21-05-1997
			EP 0773768 A1	21-05-1997
			ES 2147779 T3	01-10-2000
			ES 2144045 T3	01-06-2000
			ES 2142395 T3	16-04-2000
			FI 952407 A	17-05-1995
			FI 952408 A	17-05-1995
			FI 952410 A	17-05-1995
			FI 952411 A	17-05-1995
			GB 2272916 A ,B	01-06-1994
			GR 3032642 T3	30-06-2000
			HU 71657 A2	29-01-1996
			HU 71662 A2	29-01-1996
			HU 72386 A2	29-04-1996
			HU 72249 A2	29-04-1996
			JP 8503393 T	16-04-1996
			JP 8503394 T	16-04-1996
			JP 8503395 T	16-04-1996
			JP 8503396 T	16-04-1996
			NO 951893 A	12-05-1995
US 5891119	A	06-04-1999	JP 7024006 A	27-01-1995
			BR 9402652 A	04-04-1995
			CN 1102976 A	31-05-1995
			DE 69421330 D1	02-12-1999
			DE 69421330 T2	20-07-2000
			EP 0633009 A2	11-01-1995

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

In International Application No

PCT/US 01/48857

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 5558655	A	24-09-1996	NONE	
WO 9932165	A	01-07-1999	AU 1717199 A	12-07-1999
			CN 1336830 T	20-02-2002
			EP 1042018 A1	11-10-2000
			WO 9932165 A1	01-07-1999
			ZA 9811115 A	08-06-1999

**This Page is Inserted by IFW Indexing and Scanning  
Operations and is not part of the Official Record**

**BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES**

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images include but are not limited to the items checked:

- ☐ **BLACK BORDERS**
- ☐ **IMAGE CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES**
- ☐ **FADED TEXT OR DRAWING**
- ☒ **BLURRED OR ILLEGIBLE TEXT OR DRAWING**
- ☐ **SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES**
- ☐ **COLOR OR BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS**
- ☐ **GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS**
- ☐ **LINES OR MARKS ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT**
- ☐ **REFERENCE(S) OR EXHIBIT(S) SUBMITTED ARE POOR QUALITY**
- ☐ **OTHER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.**

**As rescanning these documents will not correct the image problems checked, please do not report these problems to the IFW Image Problem Mailbox.**

**THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)**